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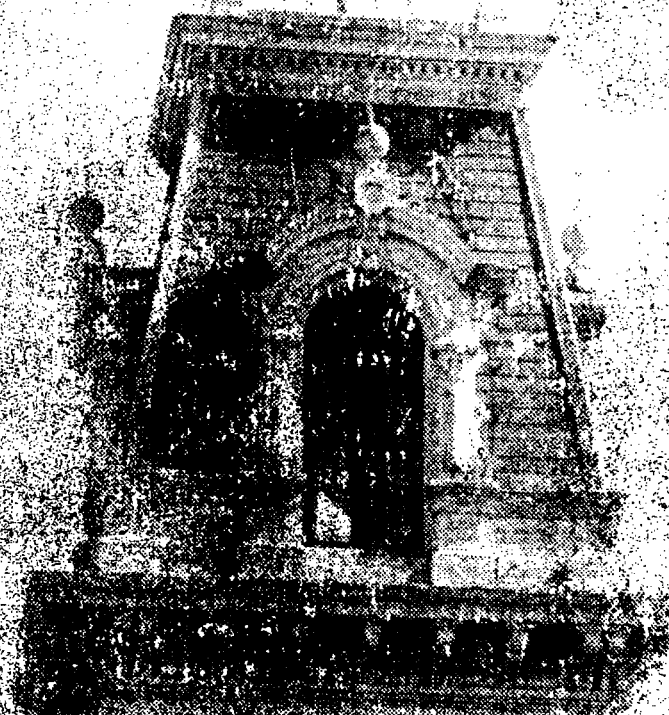
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Hillsboro

A History

by Dorothy Bliss

Based on writings
by the late Tom Bliss



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1989

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Eagle-Picher Company

One of the largest producers of lead, zinc and allied products, the Eagle-Picher Lead Company was Hillsboro's largest industry for many years.

The Hillsboro plant was built by Lanyon Zinc Company in 1912 on land purchased from H. S. Hargrave and Frank H. Brown at the east edge of Hillsboro. In the early days of operation, the plant produced slab zinc and sulphuric acid.

In 1919, the plant was purchased by Eagle-Picher. Zinc oxide furnaces were installed and, by 1923, slab zinc production was ended and zinc oxide became the principal product. Production of sulphuric acid was abandoned in 1935.

The *Hillsboro City-Cyclopedia* published in 1940 says, "The Hillsboro plant is one of nine plants throughout the country, and is the only plant making zinc oxides, used mainly as a paint pigment. It is also used in the rubber industry for rubber products, in ceramics for glazing and enameling, and is one of the important ingredients in printing ink. The site covers 30 acres where the company maintains offices, storerooms, shop facilities, in addition to buildings housing raw materials, furnaces, bag houses, packing houses, and a large warehouse utilized for storage of finished products."

The directory also named the managers and officers at that time (1940): Plant manager John L. Good, assistant manager and cashier Harold Laws, superintendent of furnace department Thomas Pulliam, superintendent of oxide packing and shipping Chester Guthrie, superintendent of maintenance and construction Elmer Davis, plant engineer Fred S. Meek, metallurgical work supervision Roy Simpson and Paul Hamilton.

Sherwin-Williams Chemicals Division bought the plant from Eagle-Picher November 24, 1980, and for seven months added personnel and increased production. The former Eagle-Picher Co. zinc oxide smelter, once a major employer of 80 or more, hit rock bottom in late 1983, by which time Sherwin-Williams had laid off everyone but two office employees.

The March 19, 1984, *Montgomery County News* reported that the Sherwin-Williams plant in Hillsboro had been sold to T. L. Diamond and Co. of New York City. The plant had been closed since June 30, 1982.

Morris Dodd of Hillsboro, acting as consultant to Theodore "Ted" Diamond, announced the sale locally and said the plant would be known as Eagle-Zinc Company of Hillsboro, a division of T. L. Diamond and Co.

An article in *The News* July 24, 1987, reported, in part: "Eagle Zinc Co., one of Hillsboro's oldest industries, is coming back. Today Eagle Zinc is operated round the clock by 24 employees. Plant manager Art Martel believes that the number will double in the next couple of years."

"Eagle-Zinc's product is now meeting the market demand for special grades of 79.5 percent pure zinc oxide."

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"Customers lost during Sherwin-Williams' three-year ownership have been regained. A marketing strategy developed by Diamond and Allen Perl, company vice president sales, is finding new customers in rubber, paint, ceramics and chemical industries."

Plant managers through the years have been R. M. Roosevelt, John Good, Paul Hamilton, John Wade, Morris Dodd, David Kinder, Oren Pickerill, William Vogel, E. J. Walsh, Lester Roomelin and Arthur Martel. In April 1989, Thomas A. Youngless of Columbus, Ohio, succeeded Martel as plant manager and said he is optimistic about the future of the zinc oxide business. The Hillsboro plant was employing about 30 men at that time.

Service awards have been presented to the following men for serving for 25 years or longer: H. C. Guthrie, Barlow Crum, A. E. Woodruff, T. J. William, Ora Dougherty, Smith Hornback, L. Schneidewind, George Dankirk, Chalmers Hill, Orville Johnson, Earl Isaacs, Otis Boyd, H. C. Sautzast, M. W. Harmer, Ralph Orvis Sr., A. D. Wygal, C. Scarsdale, Tony LaRussa, Fred Fugate, W. T. Bolton, Walter Oberle, T. O. Pickerill, Frank D. Brown, E. F. Weaver, Thomas M. Brown, Russell A. Bost, Joe H. Fugate, Orville E. Seaton, Lloyd T. Ewick, Harold H. Laws, Elvis Hicks, O. W. Clifelter, E. L. Kershaw, L. B. Bremer, Harold R. Lynch, Jess L. Carr, H. L. Walcher.

Also, Raymond Laws, Stewart Brauer, Martin Hayes, Harry Koontz, John Dankirk, Robert Macbeth, Allan Guthrie, Sam Williams, James Cash, Woodrow Lewey, William D. Hamilton, George Stephenson, Elwood M. Woodruff, William Haven, Maurice Wygal, Walter Dankoski, William M. Money, William H. Shryock, Glenn Seaton, Edward Baugher, Sylvester Savant, Edward Glenn, Shirley Dankirk, Melvin Beeler, Tony Dankoski, Anthony Durbin, Clifford Huber, Michael Lyons, Milan Poznic, Lester Roomelin, William Vogel.

Also, Aldo Zanni, John Bennett, Sam Dorlaque, Virgil Hicks, Harry Seaton, Emory Moran, Edwin Renken, W. E. Thunhorst, Wayne White, John Cash, Charles Lohr, Vernon Washburn, L. N. Banchi, Ray L. Wisaw, Clarence Laurent, Carl Laurent, Earl Reckard, M. H. Harmer, J. R. Fowler, William Gifford, James Sitton, Virgil Vincent, George Laches, John Dankoski, George Snyder, Alva Bailey, Luther White, Robert Seaton, Richard Stout, Adolph Mikolasek, John Kieslar, James Lynn, M. A. Victor Bradford and Melvin Grimm.

The Story of Coal

For many years, Montgomery County was a leading coal-producing area. The first mine was developed more than 100 years ago in Hillsboro. Subsequent development included mines in nearby Kortkamp and Taylor. In addition, plus other shafts at Nokomis, Coalton, Witt, Litchfield, Versailles and Coffeen.

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